



The President's Daily Brief

Sensitive
4 May 1972

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

4 May 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

On Page 1 we report on the latest military developments in South Vietnam [redacted]

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[redacted] President Thieu's efforts to provide more competent leadership for South Vietnamese military forces are discussed on Page 2.

The keynote speaker at Hanoi's May Day celebration indicated that the Vietnamese Communists remain deeply concerned about great power maneuvering on Vietnam. (Page 4)

Chancellor Brandt and opposition leader Barzel are no closer to finding common ground on which the Eastern treaties could be ratified. (Page 5)

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The Soviets have given the Japanese [redacted] hint that they will be flexible on the question of returning the southern Kuriles. (Page 6)

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[redacted]

[redacted]

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In Chile, the most important leaders of the government coalition may be ready to agree on more radical policies. (Page 9)

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VIETNAM

There has been little change in the military situation in South Vietnam. The Communists still are consolidating their gains in Quang Tri Province and preparing to push on toward Hue. In Hue, a fire that gutted the central market has aggravated the unsettled conditions there. In the highlands, the Communists are increasing their strength around Kontum City, but there are no indications when the attacks against the city will begin.

In MR 3, the situation at An Loc is unchanged, but there are further indications that North Vietnamese units are planning to move closer to Saigon.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

President Thieu is trying to provide more competent and vigorous leadership for some of South Vietnam's forces. In the wake of the fall of Quang Tri City, Thieu has replaced the MR 1 commander, General Lam, with the more aggressive General Truong, until now commander of MR 4 and formerly commander of the respected 1st ARVN Division. Thieu has also removed General Giai from command of the marginally effective 3rd ARVN Division, which had manned the string of fire support bases along the DMZ and had been unable to hold Quang Tri City. The recently formed 3rd was outgunned along the DMZ and outnumbered at Quang Tri City, but there is some suspicion that Giai panicked, and his performance is to be investigated.

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Generals Dzu and Minh, commanders of MR 2 and MR 3 respectively, are both close to Thieu, and this may help account for the fact that Thieu has not yet replaced them, despite the fact that both have come under heavy criticism for their occasionally timid handling of their forces. Pressures may now begin to mount for their removal.

The same kinds of criticism and dissension that have arisen within the military leadership also developed in the past following serious tactical reverses. [REDACTED]

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NORTH VIETNAM

The keynote speaker at Hanoi's May Day celebration has indicated that the Vietnamese Communists remain deeply concerned about great power maneuvering on Vietnam. In his speech, labor leader Hoang Quoc Viet acknowledged Hanoi's gratitude for both Soviet and Chinese assistance, but he left no doubt that his praise was mainly for their material aid, not their political backing. Indeed, at no less than three different points he called on Hanoi's supporters abroad--particularly the socialist bloc--to "strengthen and broaden" their support for the war effort. He also sought to discount the effectiveness of any possible "cunning schemes by the US"--almost certainly an allusion to President Nixon's summit diplomacy as well as US maneuvering at the Paris talks.

In citing both the Chinese and the Soviets for their aid, Viet may well have been trying to emphasize that Hanoi's options are not tied exclusively to Soviet assistance, and that Moscow's aid does not confer any special influence over North Vietnamese policy. The only other open reference the North Vietnamese have made to Chinese assistance since the offensive began came in a communiqué issued during the visit last week of Soviet party secretary Katushev.

Much of Viet's speech seems designed to convince foreign as well as domestic listeners that there is no reason for any Communist to compromise on the war. He assessed Communist prospects in the South in much bolder terms than most other Hanoi spokesmen have done recently, claiming that Communist forces are nearing a "total victory" on the battlefield. He also argued that there is nothing the US can do to turn the tide.

Viet phrased Communist negotiating demands so as to suggest that the next move is up to the US. Rather than dwell on the political aspects of a settlement (President Thieu's resignation was not mentioned), he focused solely on Communist demands for a US troop withdrawal and cessation of all US support for the Thieu regime. In recent days, other Communist spokesmen have similarly emphasized the withdrawal question, suggesting that Hanoi may be ready to concentrate on this point in its diplomatic dealings with the US.

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WEST GERMANY

After three meetings, Chancellor Brandt and opposition leader Barzel are no closer to finding common ground on which the Eastern treaties could be ratified. Barzel wants Brandt to get a commitment from the USSR and Poland that the treaties would not preclude eventual reunification or a German peace treaty.

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Brandt wants to settle the issue quickly in order to avoid casting a shadow over President Nixon's visits to the USSR and Poland.

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USSR-JAPAN

[REDACTED]
the question of the southern Kurile Islands, seized from Japan at the end of World War II, was being discussed [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Soviet hints of flexibility on the return of the islands, could ease the way for peace talks between the two governments. The Japanese have long held that they would not negotiate a peace treaty that did not include the return of the islands.

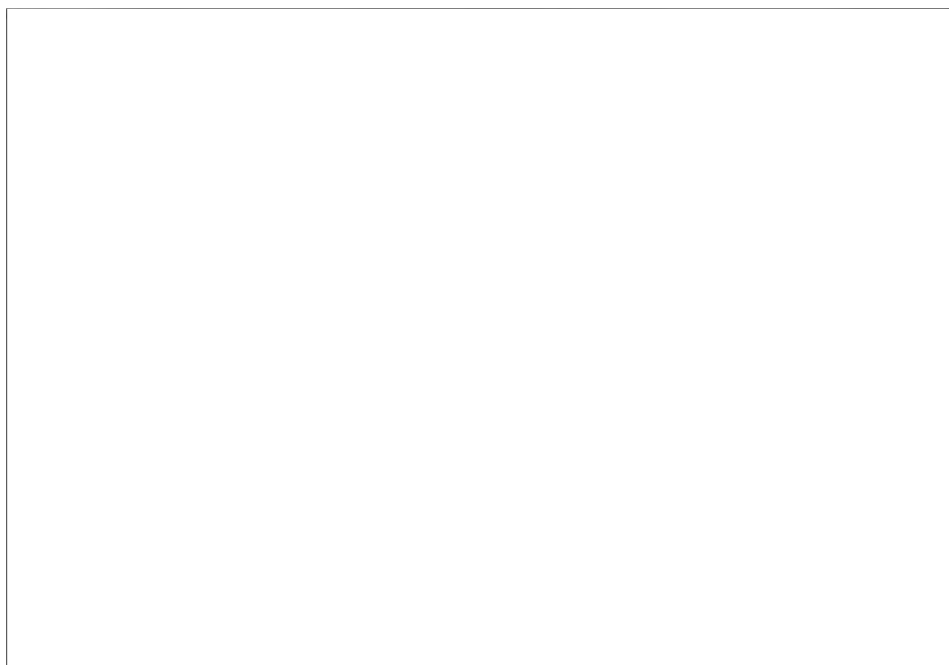
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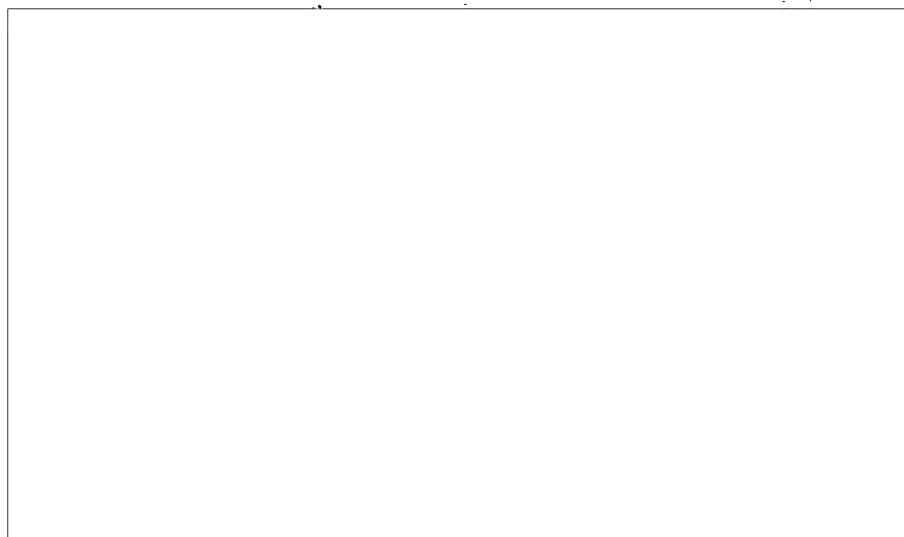
There are varying reports of what specific concessions Moscow might envision. Some Russians have hinted that Moscow might return two of the four disputed islands; others have talked of the return of all four. Soviet officials have also suggested that Japan might be satisfied with some formula by which Tokyo obtained de facto control while Moscow retained final sovereignty. Meanwhile, Moscow and Tokyo are exploring the nature of peace treaty talks, which seem likely to begin later this year.

Moscow may hope to get reciprocal concessions from the Japanese. Foreign Minister Fukuda, for example, recently suggested that Japan would consider demilitarization of the islands if they were returned. If Moscow decides to negotiate settlement of the territorial question, it might seek to include a provision such as Fukuda suggested or other concessions, such as a firm Japanese financial commitment to Siberian development.

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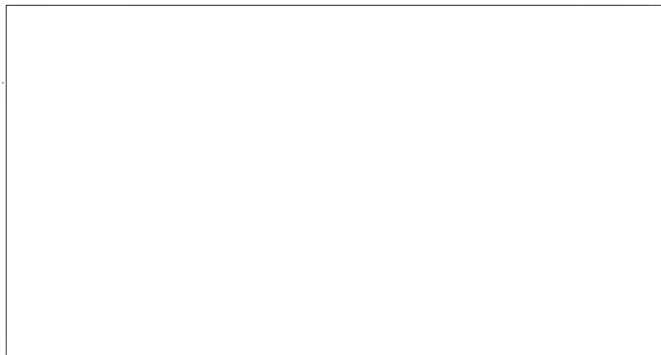
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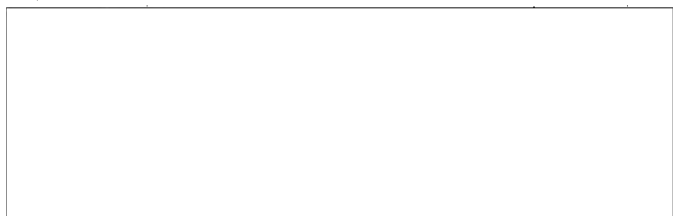
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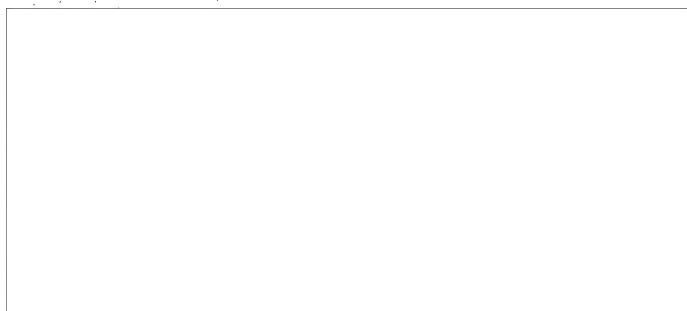


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CHILE

The most important leaders of the government coalition may be ready to adopt more radical policies

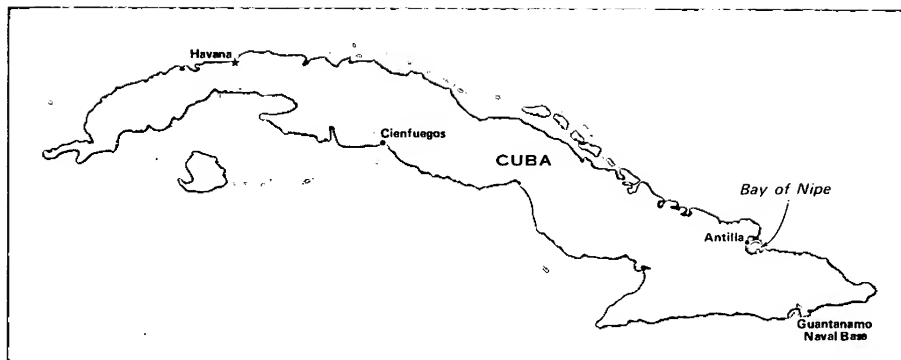
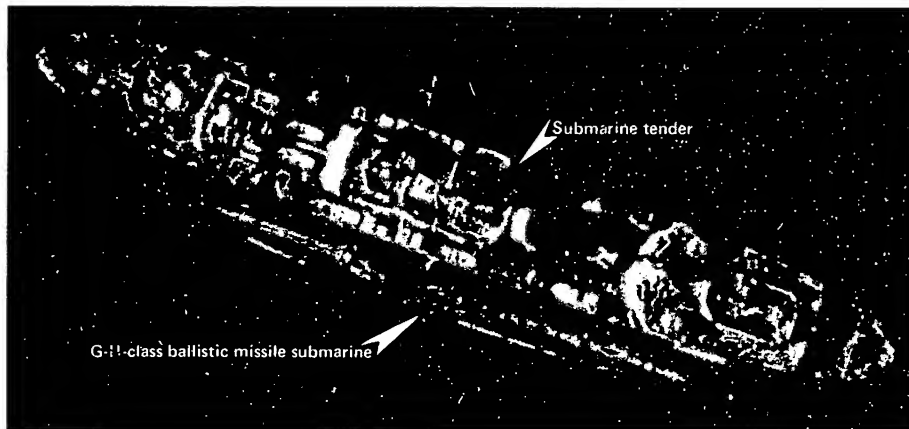
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Both Communist and Socialist members of the coalition are increasingly concerned over the erosion of public support for the government. Their resentment over Allende's high-handed personal methods is beginning to override their own deep differences over how fast Chile should become a socialist state.

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The Communists are chiefly disturbed over the deep inroads into their sources of support being made by the extremist Movement of the Revolutionary Left, which is not in the coalition. Party leaders have decided to adopt a more radical position in an attempt to fight the MIR's growing influence among labor, youth, and the news media.

Soviet Submarine Moored at Bay of Nipe



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NOTES

USSR-Cuba: U-2 photography of the Bay of Nipe on Tuesday showed the G-II class ballistic missile submarine that arrived in Cuba on 29 April tied alongside the submarine tender. The Kotlin-class destroyer and the Gagarin, a Soviet space support ship, were also in the bay. [REDACTED]

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Cambodia: Students have ended their week-long antigovernment demonstration and may return to classes today. This should tend to ease tensions in Phnom Penh, but will not bring a return to the relatively calm situation that prevailed before blood was spilled on 27 April. The students are not likely to forgive President Lon Nol or his first minister, Son Ngoc Thanh, for the shootings, and they could renew overt opposition to the government if they found an issue which would gain wider popular support.

Bangladesh: Prime Minister Mujib is resuming a more active schedule after a period of reduced public activities in mid-April apparently caused by ill health. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] on Monday the prime minister spoke over radio and television concerning his domestic program. He also has participated in party and cabinet meetings in the past week.

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